

For Immediate Release – January 24, 2013

**Washington Student
Achievement Council**

**Top education advisors invite community to help shape next decade
Student Achievement Council launches listening tour in Bellingham**

BELLINGHAM, WA – The Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC), the state's lead education agency charged with building a 10-year road map for Washington education from early learning through higher education, is kicking off its statewide listening tour in Bellingham.

"Our state is truly at a critical crossroads," said WSAC Chair Brian Baird "There are many things being done well in Washington, but there are also significant challenges. Without comprehensive changes today and in the future, too many of our citizens will be left without the knowledge and skills they need to succeed. Too many employers will be forced to look or locate somewhere else for their workforce. We cannot afford to let that happen."

The Bellingham community is invited to share its input with WSAC board members at a special public forum:

**4:30 – 6 pm, Monday, Jan. 28
Whatcom Community College, Heiner 210
237 West Kellogg Rd.**

Created by the Legislature in 2012, the Washington Student Achievement Council is the lead state agency bringing together all sectors of the state's education system to improve education access, achievement and outcomes for all Washington citizens. One of the Council's primary duties is building a comprehensive 10-year roadmap that will help guide education reform and innovation.

"We want to hear first-hand what is working, what needs to change, and how our state can improve and truly lead the nation in every aspect of education," said WSAC Board Member Scott Brittain, who also serves as the Ferndale School District's district project manager.

The Student Achievement Council released an action plan last month that identified five key challenges/opportunities for education

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- Improve readiness for higher education by addressing opportunity and achievement throughout the education system
- Expand accessibility and affordability of higher-ed and increase

- participation and success of under-represented communities
- Improve competency outcomes and expand capacity for higher education – including career and technical education
- Leverage technology and explore innovations for better learning
- Build a sustainable higher education funding model based on measurable outcomes

The nine-member Council includes five citizens, a current student, and five education sector representatives, one from the four year public universities, one from the public community and technical colleges, one from the not-for profit independent colleges and universities, and a representative from the office of the superintendent of public instruction. In addition to these members, the Council solicits input from the state Department of Early Learning, the state Workforce Development Board, the state Board of Education from other educational institutions, organizations and individuals interested in higher education.

For more information, visit <http://www.wsac.wa.gov>.

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